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PREFACE

114 This medical survey and the health program connected with it was conceived by Mr. John Collier, who was Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Dr. Manuel Gamio, the Director of the Inter-American Indian Institute, and the Committees of Health and Sanitation of the National Indian Institutes of the United States and Nicaragua, and the Office of Inter-American Affairs.

121 The primary purpose of this study was to ascertain by what measure a health program could be initiated in a sequestered low-land tropical region for inhabitants who were autoctonous Indians to that area. The survey and the program were by no means complete since the main efforts were directed to the salient problems pertinent to the health of the people. Furthermore, considerable emphasis was given to the customs and habits of the Indians since any program in order to survive must be fitted into the lives of the people and the circumstances of the local situation. And, since the writer was specializing in the field of nutrition, the subject received disproportionate study.

122 The limitations of this study can be set forth. The first of these
123 was the short time spent in the Coco Basin, a period of two months hardly being sufficient for a medical survey. The second was that no specific exhaustive anthropological method was used to study the social behavior of the Indians. But this second limitation is of no great consequence since the procedures ordinarily employed have not as yet attained quantitative values. But time should have been taken to gain a further insight into the views which these Indians held with respect to medical care. So far the authors' meagre observations form the only data from which to infer conclusions; certain "single methods" were employed and it is not too sanguine to state that still more important factors in the life, as it affects Public Health of these Indians are yet to be ascertained. Without, however, anticipating future inquiries, there is presented herewith those factors, medical and social, which the investigator deemed as sufficient in quantity to allow a recommendation for the health program of the Miskito without disrupting the social values of these people.

[p.3] [p.2 has no text material]